



CAPITOL UPDATE

OFFICE OF STATE REPRESENTATIVE
Penny Bernard Schaber

Serving the heart of Appleton



Friends,

With Earth Day's 40th anniversary coming this year on April 22, I'd like to share with you what I and my colleagues in the Assembly have accomplished this session. Since I took office last year, protecting Wisconsin's natural heritage has been one of my highest priorities.

Last fall, I was pleased to see Gov. Doyle sign into law my **E-Waste** bill. This legislation is important for both public health and the environment. When home electronics are not recycled, they can leach dangerous chemicals into our landfills and into our drinking water. The new E-Waste law requires manufacturers to collect and recycle certain electronic devices, including computers, TV's and printers, and establishes recycling targets for manufacturers based on their sales. 17 other states have passed similar legislation, and I'm proud that Wisconsin has finally joined them. This bill will go into effect on September 1st, 2010.

For the last year, I have been fine-tuning legislation to establish a **Regional Transit Authority**, or RTA, for the Fox Valley and for the entire state. On April 1st the Transportation Committee, of which I am a member, voted to approve AB 282 and send it to the full Assembly for passage. AB 282 would create RTAs for multiple communities around Wisconsin. There is a great need for an RTA in the Fox Valley. Without the RTA, Valley Transit could lose \$1.5 million in federal operating funds. The RTA will help Valley Transit maintain its operating budget and prevent increases in fares or cuts to routes. This bill calls for communities under the RTA's jurisdiction to take a referendum to the voters before raising the sales tax. A Fox Cities RTA would provide stability, greater efficiencies, and better planning for public transportation in the Fox Cities.

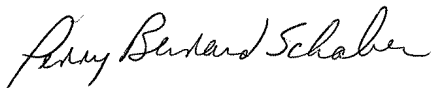
Public transportation is an essential part of protecting our environment. An effective public transportation system can reduce emissions and conserve energy while providing an important service to Appleton and Fox Cities residents. The number of people who rely on public transportation to get them to jobs, school, medical facilities, and other essential functions is growing every day. I look forward to seeing this bill through the final steps of the legislative process.

Another exciting piece of environmental legislation we're working on in the Assembly is AB 843, the **High Performance Green Building Bill**. This bill sets a higher standard of energy efficiency for state and public buildings and will help save tax dollars, energy, and water. Buildings will be rated on the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) green building rating system. New state construction projects will be required to meet energy performance and water conservation standards, and building materials will need to be properly recycled. It also requires existing state buildings to become more energy efficient.

The long term goal of AB 843 is to bring state buildings to zero net energy by 2030. This means that state buildings will produce as much energy for electricity, heating, and cooling from renewable sources as they consume annually. The construction of these buildings will not necessarily have a higher cost thanks to the help of 1,850 professionals in Wisconsin who are experts in green building design. This bill will go a long way in reducing the state's impact on the environment and cutting energy costs.

I am also pleased to announce that **2009 Wisconsin Act 9** went into effect on April 1st. This law will protect our lakes and waterways by requiring nearly all fertilizer sold in Wisconsin to be phosphorus-free. The phosphorus in many fertilizers leads to hazardous algae growth that degrades Wisconsin's water quality due to runoff. Wisconsin soil naturally has enough phosphorus to maintain healthy turf growth. Phosphorus will still be sold in some fertilizers to allow new lawns and areas without enough phosphorus to receive the phosphorus they need to flourish. This law will ensure that Wisconsin residents can continue to enjoy swimming, boating and fishing in cleaner lakes.

Finally, Governor Doyle formed a special task force on global warming, which created the **Clean Energy Jobs Act**. Statewide goals include increasing energy conservation and generating electricity from renewable resources. The Clean Energy Jobs Act creates a requirement that 6% of renewable energy resources come from Wisconsin sources by 2020. Additionally, it creates a Climate Change Coordinating Council to coordinate state programs and actions related to climate change. This council will report quarterly to the Legislature and Governor on the progress of the statewide goals. The original act has been revised and the current bill, AB 649, is less costly and creates even more jobs for Wisconsin residents. We are in a time when the status quo regarding energy use is no longer acceptable. Our state needs to find the strength and resolve to make the difficult decisions that will protect the future of our state.



Penny Bernard Schaber
57th Assembly District

Blue Books

Blue Books are still available. If you would like to receive a blue book please respond to this email with "Blue Book" in the subject line. Make sure to include your name and address so I can deliver your blue book.

Penny's Pointer

There's still time to fill out your Census form and mail it back. The Census is necessary for determining the needs of our community. It also determines legislative districts to make sure that everyone is equally represented.